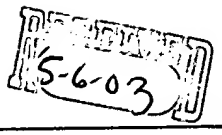
Official

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS



Please amend Claims 1, 8, 15, and 23-25 as follows:

C1 Sub D1

1. (Currently Amended-Twice) A method for use in managing outgoing calls in a call center, comprising:

initiating a call to a first party from the call center via a communication medium;

monitoring said communication medium for signals received from a location associated with said first party after said step of initiating a call;

detecting an initial audible signal received from the first party location via said communication medium, wherein the initial audible signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered;

initiating processing of said initial audible signal in a call classifier to determine a characteristic of said audible signal; and

playing a prerecorded greeting over said communication medium during said call, said prerecorded greeting being played during a time period when said call classifier is processing said initial audible signal.

2. (Original) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of playing a prerecorded greeting includes detecting a period of silence on said communication medium and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response thereto.

3. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of initiating processing includes initiating processing that will analyze whether said initial audible signal was generated by a live party during the call.

4. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:

when said call classifier determines that said initial audible signal was generated by a live party at the first party location, establishing a talk path between the live party and an agent at the call center after playback of said prerecorded greeting has ended.

5. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 3, further comprising the step of:

when said call classifier determines that said initial audible signal was not generated by a live party at the first party location, terminating the call.

6. (Original) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said communication medium includes a local loop associated with a telephone network.

7. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein:

said step of initiating a call includes dialing a telephone number associated with said first party and said initial audible signal is received from the location associated with the first party during said call.

8. (Currently Amended-Thrice) A method for use in managing an outgoing call comprising the steps of:

placing an outgoing call to a remote party location over a communication network;

processing an initial signal received from said remote party location during said call to determine a source type of said initial signal, wherein the processed signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered;

playing a prerecorded greeting to said remote party location during said step of processing, wherein said step of playing a prerecorded message includes detecting a period of silence after receipt of said initial signal and initiating playback of said prerecorded greeting in response thereto; and

after said prerecorded greeting has ended, establishing a talk path between a local agent and the remote party location when it is determined that said initial signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call.

9. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 8, further comprising the step of:

terminating the call when it is determined that said initial signal was not generated by a live party during the call.

10. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of placing an outgoing call includes dialing a telephone number associated with a remote party and said initial signal processed in the processing step is the initial audible signal received during said call.

11. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said communication network includes a public switched telephone network.

12. (Previously Amended) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of processing a signal includes using a call classifier to determine whether the initial signal was generated by a live party during the call.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Original) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein:

said step of establishing a talk path includes passing control of said call to said local agent for a remainder of the call.

15. (Currently Amended-Twice) A system for use within a call center, comprising:

a call processing unit operable to place a call to a remote party location via a communication network;

a call classifier unit operable to determine when said call is answered, detect an audible signal from the remote party location, and analyze a first detected signal received from said remote party location to determine whether said first detected signal originated from a live party during the call, wherein the first detected signal is the first signal detected by the call classifier unit after said call is answered;

a message playback unit operable to play back a prerecorded message to said remote party location while said call classifier unit is analyzing said first detected signal; and

a switch unit operable to establish a talk path between a local agent position and said remote party location when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal originated from a live party during the call.

16. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said message playback unit plays back said prerecorded message in response to detection of a period of silence during said call.

17. (Previously Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said external communication network includes a public switched telephone network and said first detected signal is received during said call.

18. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said external communication network includes at least one of the following: a satellite communication network, an optical fiber communication network, a local area network, a wide area network, a municipal area network, a private branch exchange network, an Internet network, and a terrestrial wireless network.

19. (Previously Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call processing unit includes means for terminating said call when it is determined by said call classifier unit that said first detected signal did not originate from a live party during the call.

20. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call processing unit and said switch unit are implemented within a common digital processor.

21. (Original) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call processing unit and said message playback unit are implemented within a common digital processor.

22. (Previously Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein:

said call classifier unit is part of a pool of call classifier units; and

said call processing unit is operable to assign call classifier units from said pool of call classifier units to individuals calls being supported by the call center.

23. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~initial audible signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered~~call to the first party is the initial call made by the call center to the first party.

24. (Currently Amended) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein the ~~processed signal is the first signal detected after said call is answered~~outgoing call to the remote party location is the initial call made to the remote party location.

25, (Currently Amended) The system claimed in claim 15, wherein the ~~first detected signal is the first signal detected by the call classifier unit after said call is answered~~the call to the remote party location is the initial call made by the call center to the remote party location.

Please add the following new Claims 26-28:

C7

26. (New) The method claimed in claim 3, wherein the analysis whether said initial audible signal was generated by a live party is the initial analysis made during the call.

27. (New) The method claimed in claim 8, wherein the determination whether the initial signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call is the initial such determination made during the call.

28. (New) The method claimed in claim 15, wherein the determination whether the first detected signal is a voice signal that was generated by a live party during the call is the initial such determination made during the call.